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### **Looking to waste wood for energy solutions**

Burning wood for heat and power is older than civilisation itself. However, new ways have been developed to turn wood residues into fuel for clean, renewable energy that can help lower Australia's carbon emissions.

American forestry expert Dave Atkins will be in Australia in April to speak at the Residues to Revenues conference about how fire mitigation strategies in the United States have been linked to producing wood pellets for energy uses.

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI), one of the sponsors of Mr Atkins' visit and the peak representative body for the Victorian timber industry, has welcomed a discussion on the benefits of bioenergy use.

VAFI Public Affairs Manager Shaun Ratcliff said Mr Atkins would be able to start a dialogue in Australia about how forest resources could be used to reduce carbon emissions, while managing fire risk and creating new rural industries and jobs.

"In the United States they have taken timber residues and wood removed for fire reduction purposes and used it to fuel cheap, clean and renewable energy for public schools," he said.

"It has been estimated that there are approximately three million tonnes of wood residues available in Australia for bioenergy purposes.

"This waste wood could be used to meet some of Australia's renewable energy target while keeping sufficient residues in the forest to protect biodiversity."

"If some of this can also be used to reduce fire risk in one of the most fire prone countries on the planet, it would be a win-win situation we just cannot afford to ignore."

The Residues to Revenues Conference has been organised by the Forest Industry Engineering Association (FIEA). It is supported by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

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